Ministry of the Economy

Annual Regulatory Modernization Progress Report for 2015-16

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Government of Saskatchewan

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Letters of Transmittal

The Honourable Jeremy Harrison
Minister Responsible for Immigration, Jobs, Skills and Training

Her Honour, the Honourable Vaughn Solomon Schofield, Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan

May it Please Your Honour:

I respectfully submit the Annual Regulatory Modernization Progress Report of the Ministry of the Economy for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016.

The Honourable Jeremy Harrison

Minister Responsible for Immigration, Jobs, Skills and Training

Laurie Pushor
Deputy Minister of the Economy

The Honourable Jeremy Harrison, Minister Responsible for Immigration, Jobs, Skills and Training

May it Please Your Honour:

I am pleased to submit the Annual Regulatory Modernization Progress Report of the Ministry of the Economy for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016. This report has been prepared and carefully reviewed under my direction, and accurately represents the activities and accomplishments of government ministries, agencies and Crown corporations during the year.

Laurie Pushor

Deputy Minister of the Economy

Introduction

As part of its commitment to the growth of the province's economy, the Government of Saskatchewan is focused on:

- Developing smart regulations; and
- Reviewing existing regulations regularly, to make sure they remain relevant.

Smart regulation promotes the protection of public health, safety and the environment, and allows businesses to compete, innovate and prosper—benefiting all Saskatchewan residents.

Regulations should never be adopted as a default position, but as a last resort. They cannot eliminate all risks, nor should they. The goal is to develop smarter not additional regulations. This means, wherever possible:

- Encouraging compliance by using incentives for business; and
- Targeting enforcement by using a risk-based approach.

Smart regulation simplifies compliance requirements, saving businesses both time and money.

In the 2015-16 fiscal year, the provincial government eliminated 53 regulations that were redundant or had become obsolete. It also completed a full review of existing regulations. With this, government remains on schedule to achieve the mandate to review all business related regulations at least once every 10 years—to ensure they remain responsive to the needs of business.

Quantifying the cost of red tape is essential to measuring progress in eliminating unnecessary regulatory burdens. This year, government expanded the use of a direct cost estimating tool, the Regulatory Cost Model (RCM), to measure the cost of red tape. In 2014-15, government began piloting the use of the RCM. It has so far been applied to five pilot projects, resulting in quantifiable savings of $15.47 million for both government and business stakeholders, over the mandated 10-year review period. This is well ahead of the targeted savings of $10 million. The government will continue to apply the RCM to initiatives identified in the *2015-16 Regulatory Modernization Annual Progress Report* and work towards full implementation of the cost estimating tool during the 2016-17 fiscal year.

Regulatory modernization adapts to the changing needs of business and a changing economy. It means working closely with business, identifying barriers and impediments, and developing innovative solutions that result in the smallest regulatory footprint. This report outlines the government's successes over the past year to reduce red tape and eliminate regulatory barriers for business, which allows them to invest in growing their business.

Enhancing Customer Service and Opportunity

Government renewal is about ensuring the work of the public service remains relevant and is in step with the needs of Saskatchewan people, contributing to the growth of the province. Renewal is a commitment to ensure government considers the needs and expectations of businesses and Saskatchewan people, and builds those considerations into its everyday work. Adopting a client-centred approach helps provide focus by asking the right questions about how government can improve its services. It means providing easy access to government services, streamlining government processes and enhancing services such as:

- Simplifying and using plain language in government documents;
- Adopting a single entry and contact point for approvals and client information; and
- Providing clear and direct information through its policies and regulation.

It also means eliminating non-value added activities, like the removal of redundant and duplicative processes, as well as reducing application processing and wait times. The following are some initiatives that were implemented this year to enhance customer service and opportunities:

Ministry of Advanced Education

User-Friendly Application Forms

The Ministry of Advanced Education wanted to improve administrative processes for Disability Grant Programs. The Student Loan Disability Grant Program application was a cumbersome manual process that involved filling out a number of difficult-to-understand paper forms. Applications took a long time to process.

The ministry's goals were to streamline processes, develop a common understanding of institutional and government responsibilities and ensure transparent approvals. To achieve these improvements, representatives from Advanced Education, post-secondary institutions and disability support groups were joined by students to discuss ways to improve the application process through a Lean Value Stream Mapping event. The objective was to improve the student application forms and reduce processing time.

The result was a new user-friendly application form, the Canada-Saskatchewan Grant for Services and Equipment for Students with Permanent Disabilities Application, as well as a new Verification of Permanent Disability form. Implemented on March 1, 2016, the new forms are expected to reduce processing times for staff and decrease wait times for students. Students will now receive funding sooner and have their accommodations arranged sooner.

Ministry of Agriculture

Agricultural Crown Land Sales Program Sale Eligibility Checks

The Ministry of Agriculture announced a new incentive program to encourage the sale of eligible occupied agricultural Crown land. The program offers purchase incentives on the sale of the land to current lease-holders. All agricultural Crown land including cultivated, grazing and hay land that is deemed to have no public and low environmental benefit is eligible for the program.

This program resulted in almost 1,400 applications to purchase nearly 800,000 acres of Crown land in the first five months of the program. A variety of ministries, agencies and the rural municipality the land is located in must review these lands to determine if they are eligible for sale, or if they should be retained by the Crown for a higher public good. Previously, there were no standard timeframes to review the eligibility of lands for sale.

The collaborating organizations were engaged to determine the feasibility of a two-week turnaround time for sales checks. Through these discussions, a number of efficiencies were found, and some new processes and tools implemented to speed up review time.

All parties agreed to meet these timelines with certain specific exceptions put in place where the two-week turnaround may not be required.

Establishment Benefit of the Crop Insurance Program

In late May and early June 2015, frost impacted newly emerging canola crops in many areas of the province. Crop Insurance customers were insured for the frost damage; however, producers needed to make a quick decision about whether to reseed or leave the crop to recover.

Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation (SCIC) responded by immediately relocating staff to affected areas, to assess and process Establishment Benefit claims quickly. Where producers needed to reseed their crop immediately, SCIC processed the claims and had payments to them quickly, providing them the financial resources to reseed.

In situations where producers were able to reseed before their claim was adjusted, SCIC adapted its procedures and requested check-strips be left on the damaged crop. This gave producers the flexibility to make the right business decision for their farm, while ensuring the claim would be handled appropriately.

A total of, $47.4 million in Establishment Benefit claims were processed in a timely manner.

Ministry of Education

Translation of *The Child Care Act, 2014* and *The Child Care Regulations, 2015*

All licensed child care centres in Saskatchewan, including nine francophone child care centres, must abide by *The Child Care Act, 2014* and *The Child Care Regulations, 2015*. After consultation with Conseil des écoles fransaskois (CEF) and the Association des parents fransaskois (APF), it was requested *The Child Care Act, 2014* and *The Child Care Regulations, 2015* be translated, to ensure they are understood and interpreted correctly by francophone daycare directors who routinely use the information.

This bilingual legislation supports francophone child care centres as well as Saskatchewan's francophone community.

Ministry of the Economy

Improving Regulatory Decisions with the Regulatory Cost Model

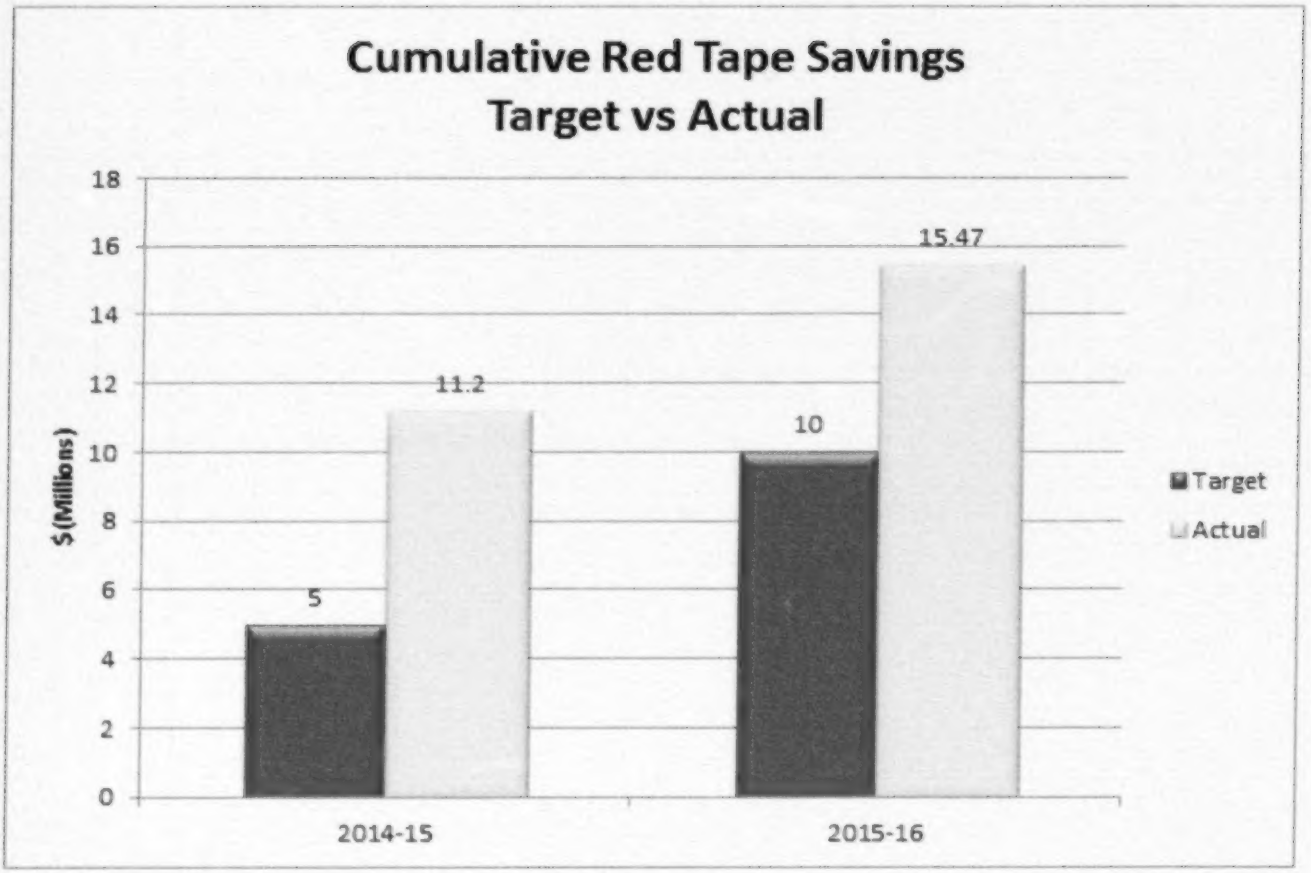
The Government of Saskatchewan needs to continually improve the regulatory environment, to remove barriers and irritants that impede growth, innovation and competitiveness. In order to assess whether the government is making progress as intended, performance needs to be quantified.

The Ministry of the Economy has now adopted a direct cost estimating tool, the Regulatory Cost Model (RCM), to measure progress with reducing red tape. For the 2014-15 and 2015-16 fiscal years, the ministry identified $15.5 million in red tape cost savings. Of this total, $11.0 million was achieved through improvements to internal (government) processes. Another $4.5 million in cost savings resulted from improvements to processes for external (business) stakeholders. Through the use of the RCM, the Government of Saskatchewan has exceeded its $5 million annual savings target.

By quantifying results, the government can clearly identify the size of impact it is making with reducing time and resources for businesses to comply with its regulations. This allows the government to better focus attention on reducing red tape in sectors that most improve business competitiveness.

The Ministry of the Economy is working with provincial ministries, agencies and Crowns to expand use of the RCM. For the remainder of 2016, the RCM will be applied to quantify additional red tape reduction initiatives outlined in the *2015-16 Regulatory Modernization Annual Report*. This action will result in further savings being identified for the 2015-16 fiscal year. In addition, ministries, agencies and Crowns are being asked to apply the RCM on a proactive basis for all annual report submissions going forward.

The Red Tape Committee is a sub-committee of the Legislation and Regulation Review Committee. Each year, ministries, agencies and Crowns review specific regulations with the committee. This forms part of the provincial government's mandate to review all regulations at least once every 10 years, to ensure they are meeting their intended objectives. Starting in the 2016-17 fiscal year, ministries, agencies and Crowns presenting regulatory reviews to the Red Tape Committee will be required to apply the RCM when applicable, as part of their analysis work.



Source: Regulatory ModernizationUnit, Ministry of the Economy. Cost savings are over a 10-year period and include savings for both government and business stakeholders. See Appendix A for project specific details.

Oil and Gas Single Window Initiative

In the past, the oil and gas industry had to apply to multiple provincial agencies, primarily the ministries of Agriculture, Environment and Economy, for approval to access targeted lands and to drill wells. This approach was inconvenient for industry; moreover, the longer approval timelines and delays in implementing new drilling projects were unsatisfactory. Other provinces, such as Alberta, were operating with a single regulator and had started automating routine approval processes.

A cross-ministry group including representatives from the three ministries worked together with representatives from industry to design a process that would:

- Allow for a single point of submission;
- Meet regulatory oversight requirements; and
- Include service standard commitments.

Subsequently, a single-window approach for well licence applications was launched on November 19, 2015, through the implementation of the Ministry of the Economy's Integrated Resource Information System (IRIS). IRIS is an online business system that supports the development and regulation of Saskatchewan's energy and resources industry. Through this system, the oil and gas industry is able to complete regularly performed business activities and regulatory tasks with the province online.

IRIS has significantly enhanced how the oil and gas industry does business with the Government of Saskatchewan. By working with industry in its design, the Ministry of Economy was able to ensure the new system included functions that improved the customer experience from both ease-of-use and service-delivery. As a result, industry applicants can complete a series of disclosure questions and attach all necessary documentation in IRIS. The disclosure questions determine whether an application is routine or non-routine, and what information is to be provided. If the application is routine, the licence will be issued immediately upon submission. If the application is non-routine, a review will be required for approval or denial.

The Government of Saskatchewan's yearly target is for 65 per cent of the well licence applications within IRIS, to be treated as routine applications and issued immediately upon submission. The objective for non-routine applications is to have these well licences proceed within 14 days.

As at February 2016, 49 per cent of IRIS applications were routine; 36 per cent of non-routine applications had a turnaround time of five days or less, and the average turnaround for non-routine applications was 7.5 days. In addition, 15 per cent of applications had a turnaround time longer than 14 days. These were complex requests requiring in-depth reviews by provincial officials.

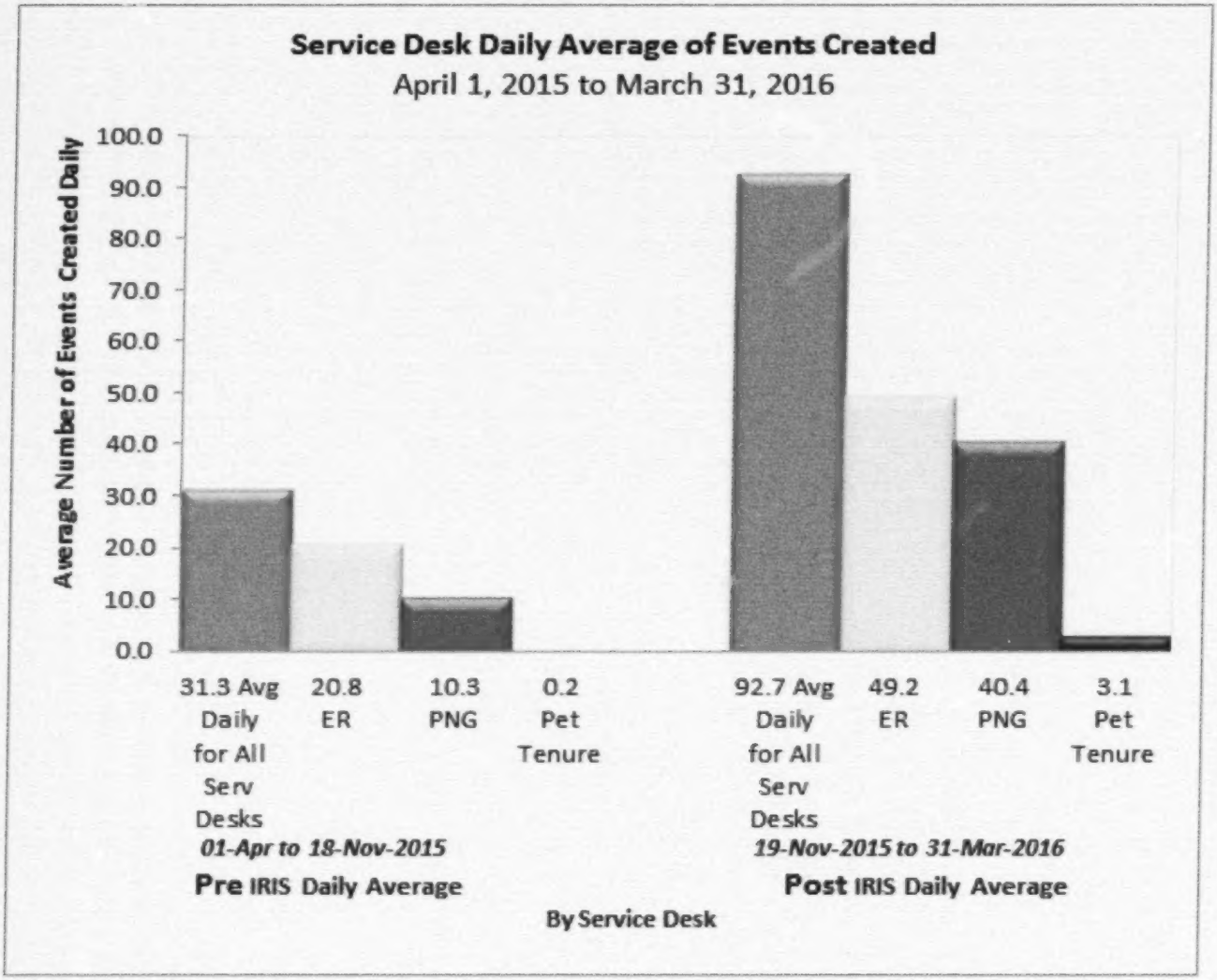
Overall, IRIS benefits industry and government by modernizing government-industry interaction, improving application approval times and increasing inter-ministry co-ordination. The Ministry of the Economy will continue to work with other ministries and stakeholders to improve and expand the system over time, to better meet the needs of clients.

Introduction of the Service Desk

The oil and gas industry submits 100 per cent of required regulatory information online through IRIS. To support this self-service process, the Ministry of the Economy introduced a service desk model. This approach helps the ministry provide quality customer service to the resource and labour market sectors. The service desk also helps the ministry maintain and strengthen its focus on service excellence to clients by:

- Providing clients with a single point of contact to get their questions answered and issues resolved as quickly as possible;
- Enhancing client service by providing first-line customer support; and
- Reducing costs through the efficient use of technology and resources.

The service desk has common governance and integrated systems, an after-hours emergency number, as well as three contact phone numbers. These help clients direct their inquiries more efficiently, though the goal remains a "first call resolution" to answer for inquiries as much as possible, regardless of number. In the last year, 13,250 requests were processed through the service desk.



Source: Ministry of the Economy

Implementation of a Pre-Authorized Debit (PAD) Process

The Ministry of the Economy implemented a pre-authorized debit (PAD) process in 2015, to allow clients in the non-renewal resource sector to make timely payments, reducing the possibility of delayed payments and interest charges.

Through PAD, clients can pay for Crown land sales, annual lease rentals, monthly disposition lease rentals, and oil and gas well levy fees. The automated process ensures the correct payment amounts can be deducted when due. It also saves time and allows the ministry to focus on providing high-quality customer service, rather than on receivables.

The Ministry of the Economy currently has 750 clients set up for PAD and is in the process of setting up another 325 clients who will be invoiced in the 2016-17 fiscal year. Presently, 100 per cent of crown land sale invoice payments are received through PAD. Revenue recognition for the reporting period is now timely and accurate.

The Employment Training Regulations Amendment to Support Implementation of the New Canada Job Grant

The Canada-Saskatchewan Job Grant (CSJG) is a new approach to providing funding for employee training. The employer-driven program is funded under a federal-provincial Canada-Saskatchewan Job Fund Agreement (JFA). It links training to actual job requirements and leverages employer investments in recruiting and training a skilled workforce.

The CSJG requirements and procedures were reviewed to provide added benefits to Saskatchewan employers and job seekers from all sectors of the economy. *The Employment Program Regulations* were amended to enable the provincial government enter into agreements with employers, training institutions, community-based organizations and individuals.

Through the CSJG, employers choose the training required for their trainees and contribute a third of the eligible training costs. The government in turn contributes up to $10,000 per trainee. Participation is encouraged from diverse groups of employers, and each qualifying employer is granted a maximum of $250,000 per fiscal year towards this program. This amount aligns the CSJG with the Ministry of the Economy's existing labour market program spending authorities.

Employers can use the CSJG for upgrading the skills of their existing workforce and to recruit and train new employees, including those from under-represented groups (e.g., First Nations and Métis, people with disabilities and people with low literacy levels).

Ministry of Health

The Medical Care Insurance Beneficiary and Administration Regulations

The Medical Care Insurance Beneficiary and Administration Regulations (MCIBA) have provisions that stipulate which medical services are non-insured services. Though MRI services in Saskatchewan have never been an insured service, the MCIBA regulations did not explicitly stipulate that they were non-insured.

In 2015, the provincial government introduced new legislation (*The MRI Facilities Licensing Act*) to allow people to pay privately for MRIs. To specify that MRI services in Saskatchewan are non-insured, and to enable private payment for those services, consequential amendments to MCIBA were required, alongside the proclamation of the new Act and its new regulations.

The amendments to the regulations clarify the actual practice in Saskatchewan, and ensure Saskatchewan people who choose to pay for an MRI can access that service right here in the province, while also providing additional capacity within the public system.

The MRI Facilities Licensing Act and Regulations

Saskatchewan's health care system is focused on improving patient access to needed diagnostic and treatment services. Patients are waiting longer for MRIs than any other specialized medical imaging service.

Providing timely and high-quality medical imaging services to Saskatchewan patients is a high priority for the government. The proclamation of *The MRI Facilities Licensing Act* and *Regulations* has given patients who require a medically necessary MRI scan another option in making their own care choices. It also ensures Saskatchewan patients who choose to pay for an MRI can access that service in the province. Saskatchewan patients previously had to travel out of the province to other jurisdictions where they could pay for their own MRI.

The new Act and regulations have paved the way for patients to have the option to choose to directly pay a private facility for a medically necessary MRI scan. A physician referral is still required.

This innovative new framework, which is unique to Saskatchewan, also provides a benefit to the public system by requiring licensed private facilities to provide a second scan, free of charge, to a patient on the public health system wait list. The implementation of the Act and regulations complement the publicly funded system by expanding capacity, which should improve patients' access to MRI services.

This arrangement is similar to agreements that allow for the Saskatchewan Roughriders and the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) to purchase MRI scans. In both cases, the Roughriders and the WCB pay for an additional scan for a patient on the public wait list.

Ministry of Government Relations

The Local Government Election Act, 2015* and *The Local Government Election Regulations, 2015

Historically, the rules for elections in rural and urban municipalities have been separate, due to municipal differences. However, over time these differences have decreased and led to unnecessary repetition in local election legislation and regulations.

In spring 2015, *The Local Government Election Act, 2015,* was completely rewritten to standardize and simplify the local government election process for urban and rural municipalities in the province. The Ministry of Government Relations also took the opportunity to address the duplication and inconsistencies of local election forms in *The Local Government Election Regulations, 2015.* There was an urban and rural form for the same election requirement, needlessly complicating the process for municipal administrators and election officials.

In an effort to enhance customer service for municipal administrators and election officials, repetitive and unrequired forms have been eliminated, with the language of the forms clarified. There is now one set of forms that applies to all municipalities, while urban and rural differences have been maintained when necessary.

Changes to the forms have streamlined the local election process for all municipalities in the province and create administrative efficiencies for those who administer local elections in Saskatchewan.

The Municipal Conflict of Interest Amendment Act, 2015

Transparent and accountable decision-making has become increasingly important for all levels of government. *The Final Report of the Inquiry into the Rural Municipality of Sherwood* – also known as the *Barclay Report* – produced several recommendations for strengthening local government conflict of interest legislation for all municipalities in the province.

In response, the Ministry of Government Relations set out to address the recommendations in the *Barclay Report,* along with additional areas related to conflict of interest. The result was *The Municipal Conflict of Interest Amendment Act, 2015* (Bill 186), which strengthens and clarifies conflict of interest requirements in three municipal Acts:

- *The Municipalities Act;*
- *The Cities Act;* and
- *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2010.*

The changes expand the mandate of the Provincial Ombudsman to include municipal matters, and require members of council:

- Give a more detailed declaration of the nature of their conflict of interest;
- File and regularly update disclosure statements; and
- Adopt a code of ethics.

The new conflict of interest requirements intend to build the public's trust in municipal governance by requiring members of council to actively work towards more open, accountable and objective decision-making processes.

The Provincial Disaster Assistance Program

The Provincial Disaster Assistance Program (PDAP) strives to provide essential disaster recovery funding to eligible claimants in a timely and effective manner, while maintaining fiscal accountability and maximizing federal cost sharing.

To address potential safety issues while further assisting claimants experiencing significant financial pressures, PDAP implemented a new approach, which provides necessary funding to claimants experiencing certain structural damages to their property. Funds are now provided in advance for eligible repairs, based on submitted cost quotations, rather than as reimbursement for completed and invoiced repairs.

This initiative helps to reduce the financial hardship for many claimants, as well as accelerates the remediation of potential public safety hazards.

PDAP at Work in Wolseley, Saskatchewan

The Town of Wolseley SK, experienced devastating floods in 2011 and 2014, leaving it surrounded with water and with limited to no access in or out of the community.

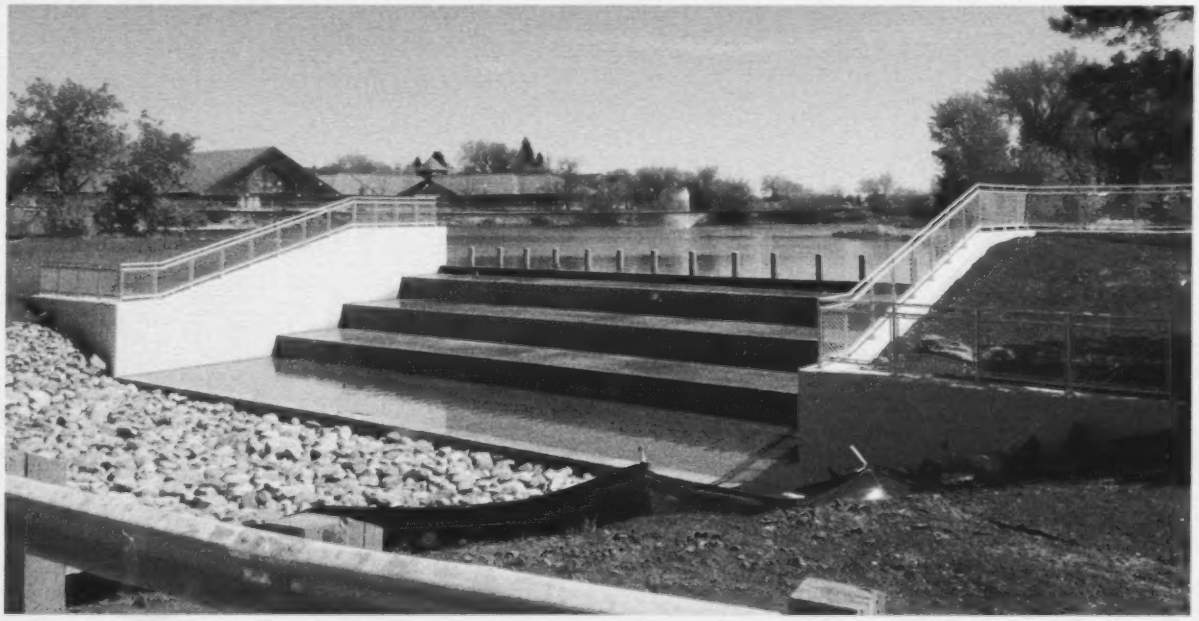
The town took advantage of the Provincial Disaster Assistance Program (PDAP) to rebuild, with its most recent project being the Adair Creek Spillway and Channel Repair. Working with the PDAP team on this project, the town was able to focus on a restoration of infrastructure in a manner that:

- Conserved its diverse heritage in the affected area;
- Complied with the Canadian Dam Safety Guidelines; and
- Offered disaster mitigation measures for the future.

"PDAP certainly understands municipal operations, and is most accommodating towards the financial aspects," Town of Wolseley Administrator, Candice M. Quintyn said. "Being a small rural community, the tax base of Wolseley undoubtedly cannot afford such large infrastructure projects without creating long-term debt."

During the building phase of the project, the town received large invoices for payment. The dedicated PDAP team worked closely with the Town Office, providing funding on time so that cash flow concerns could be avoided.

"PDAP is a proven success—the evidence lies within the heart of Wolseley, Saskatchewan, at the Adair Creek Spillway. The program supports local governments, working together with communities until all parties are satisfied with the results and the claim is closed," Quintyn said. "Municipalities of Saskatchewan are very privileged to have a financially supported program in place for those who have lost infrastructure due to natural disaster."



Adair Creek Spillway, rebuilt after 2014 flood
Source: Candice Quintyn, Administrator, Town of Wolseley—May 17, 2016

Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority

Special Occasion Permit

Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority (SLGA) conducted a complete review of Special Occasion Permit (SOP) policies. The purpose of the review was to eliminate red tape and unnecessary barriers while maintaining a focus on public safety and social responsibility. The review included the development of a new SOP policy manual that is available to the public.

Introduction of Growlers

On March 1, 2016, SLGA announced that it is expanding the ability to sell craft beer in growlers (take-home containers) to off-sales, franchises and private retail stores. In addition, two SLGA stores (one in Regina and one in Saskatoon) will implement growler filling stations as a pilot project in the coming months.

Growlers are reusable containers favoured by craft beer drinkers. These containers are usually 64 ounces in size and made of glass. They can be re-used, with the consumer only paying for the actual beer. Previously, growler fills were limited to microbreweries and brew pubs where the beer was made, as well as farmers' markets.

The change from SLGA means consumers will have additional opportunities to purchase craft beer products in the province. It also means opening up new retail opportunities for those in the craft beer industry.

Businesses that decide to offer growler fills will be required to ensure at least one of their four (or fewer) taps provides Saskatchewan-made beer. Where there are more than four taps, at least two must offer Saskatchewan-made beer.

SaskEnergy

Sask 1st Call Safety Patrols

In 2014, Saskatchewan's three Crown utilities (SaskPower, SaskEnergy and SaskTel), together with Sask 1st Call and the Saskatchewan Common Ground Alliance (SCGA), launched a Safety Patrol pilot project—the first of its kind in Canada. This program is designed to promote first-hand, face-to-face awareness of safe digging practices, including contacting Sask 1st Call to mark underground lines, while also developing a safe dig work plan.

Sask 1st Call Safety Patrols directly interact with homeowners and contractors conducting underground excavation work, specifically in new urban neighbourhoods in Saskatoon, Regina, Moose Jaw and many other communities across the province.

Maxim Energy, a Saskatchewan company with extensive knowledge of the operation of underground utility lines and proven understanding of safe digging practices, was contracted to provide the personnel for the patrol program. The Safety Patrols visit work sites in target areas during the traditional construction season from May 1st to October 31st. Travelling in Sask 1st Call vehicles, the Safety Patrols initially visited new Saskatoon and Regina suburbs where utilities had reported a higher frequency of facility damage incidents. The program's effectiveness during the 2014 pilot has resulted in an expansion for 2015 of the number of communities visited and the roles and responsibilities of the patrols.

Feedback for the Sask 1st Call Safety Patrol program has been extremely positive. The direct, face-to-face contact encourages two-way dialogue with the digging community and identifies concerns that are valuable to Sask 1st Call, SCGA and the utility Crowns. Over the past two years, the program has contributed to a reduction in underground facility damage for the three utility Crown corporations, with further program enhancements planned for the 2016 construction season. To date, SaskEnergy has seen an almost 30 per cent reduction in line hits over the past two years, thanks to Safety Patrols and other public safety and awareness initiatives. Plans are in place to continue the Safety Patrol program for the 2016 construction season.

Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Program

SaskEnergy has experienced very positive results with the investment in its Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) program, as it has enhanced the corporation's ability to provide excellent customer service.

Through this program, SaskEnergy has retrofitted two-thirds (over 270,000) of its existing natural gas meters with an AMI gas module. The battery-operated electronic modules enhance gas meters and record usage on a daily basis, replacing estimate reads with actual reads for consumption billing purposes.

AMI provides a more modern, responsive energy measurement system for customers. It also offers significant benefits, such as:

- More accurate billing;
- Significantly reduced customer billing enquiries;
- More efficient tenancy changes;
- Fewer employees needed for manual meter reads; and
- Immediate benefits experienced by customers from any efficiency upgrades and renovations to their homes.

SaskEnergy customers have welcomed the changes to their natural gas billing, preferring the automated system, which is based on actual consumption.

Natural gas modules are now installed and operational in over 50 urban and 42 First Nations communities. Installation is a safe and simple process that does not disrupt natural gas service. There have been no safety issues with any gas modules installed on SaskEnergy gas meters, and no safety issues reported by any natural gas utility in North America.

In 2016, SaskEnergy plans to install an additional 20,000 to 30,000 modules in the province—with the goal of having all customers updated by the end of 2018.

Compressed Natural Gas/Liquefied Natural Gas Solutions

Compressed Natural Gas (CNG)/Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) are fuel sources that can be deployed as cost-effective and environmentally friendly alternatives to traditional fuels, such as diesel, gasoline and propane. Combined with the SaskEnergy/TransGas traditional delivery model, which has been enhanced through its industry-leading fleet of mobile compressors, the use of CNG and LNG allows TransGas to provide new and existing customer operations with greater flexibility and overall value.

In 2013, SaskEnergy created the first commercial high-capacity CNG truck-transport supply station in Saskatchewan. This formed part of a three-year natural gas delivery agreement signed with CanGas Solutions Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of CanElson Drilling Inc., an oil and gas drilling company based in Calgary, Alberta. Since then, SaskEnergy has also successfully deployed CNG trailers to provide natural gas service to customers during both planned outages and during unplanned/emergency situations.

In November 2014, SaskEnergy initiated a pilot project with Ferus Natural Gas Fuels for the use of LNG to serve the town of Aberdeen and surrounding rural customers throughout the 2014-2015 winter. The project evaluated the capability of LNG as a supplemental source of gas supply when winter system demands peak, and to assess opportunities where LNG or CNG can be used as a portable pipeline alternative to the financial commitment required for looping existing pipelines. The operation involves a mobile LNG storage and vaporization unit, which serves as a secure source of supply during peak demand loads. The LNG trailer allowed SaskEnergy to postpone an estimated $5 million in capital costs that would be required to loop the transmission line to meet demand in this growing area.

Having proven the viability of CNG and LNG on the SaskEnergy/TransGas pipeline system, these options have allowed SaskEnergy to create a potential new revenue stream (CNG transport supply), and can reduce timelines related to new customer connections, delay or defer the construction of new pipelines, minimize customer outage impact, improve emergency response, allow for more flexible energy delivery options and maintain/improve on environmental performance.

Leveraging new technology and private industry partners has made this a viable source of temporary energy supply. SaskEnergy/TransGas is now looking to refine the process and supply chain to support the continued use of LNG and CNG in its operations.

Building a Flexible and Modern Regulatory Framework

Governments have traditionally relied on prescriptive, command-and-control regulations to mitigate potential harmful actions or consequences. However, modern and flexible regulatory approaches are being used to achieve social, economic and environmental objectives in a more effective and efficient manner.

Allowing for more flexibility stimulates innovation of new ideas and processes for businesses to achieve regulatory compliance and to help them capitalize on their competitive advantages, leading to growth and expansion. Regulatory flexibility creates incentives and multiple pathways to regulatory compliance, with a focus on outcomes. Modern regulations promote government transparency, accountability and fairness. They also require governments to carefully consider feedback from stakeholders and incorporate it into government decisions at all levels. Resolving public issues requires consideration of various alternatives, such as incentive-based solutions, rather than an immediate default to more government regulations. Problems are risk-assessed to determine if they require action from government.

The following initiatives have been implemented to support the adoption of a flexible and modern regulatory framework:

Ministry of Agriculture

The Saskatchewan Farm Security Act* and *The Saskatchewan Farm Security (Farm Ownership) Amendment Regulations, 2015

The Ministry of Agriculture conducted extensive consultations with Saskatchewan residents to better understand concerns with regards to farmland ownership in the province. Over the summer of 2015, more than 3,200 people shared their views on farmland ownership in the province, with the vast majority not supporting pension plans or foreign investors purchasing farmland in the province.

The new *Saskatchewan Farm Security Act,* and *The Saskatchewan Farm Security Regulations:*

- Exclude land that is primarily used for sand and gravel extraction from the definition of "farm land," eliminating the need for the Farm Land Security Board (FLSB) to provide exemptions for sand and gravel extractions;
- Extend the period during which conservation groups may obtain land holdings up to 100,000 acres to May 1, 2026, thereby eliminating the need for FLSB exemptions;
- Specifically make pensions, administrators of pension assets and large investment trusts ineligible to purchase farmland;
- Define a mortgage and other types of agreements from other types of institutions other than financial institutions;
- Allow additional types of entities to be defined as either "Canadian-owned entity," or "Non-Canadian-owned entity;" and
- Clarify the definition of "land holding."

By clearly identifying who can and cannot own farmland in Saskatchewan, the new Act and regulations ensure that farmers and ranchers have the required access to the land resources they need. Ultimately, the new Act and Regulations will help ensure the long-term success and sustainability of Saskatchewan's agriculture industry and economy, while ensuring ownership exemptions can continue to be granted for economic development initiatives and to maintain a positive investment climate.

Ministry of Education

The Registered Teachers Act

The proclamation of *The Registered Teachers Act* provided Saskatchewan teachers the autonomy to self-regulate like other professions in the province.

Prior to this transition, the Ministry of Education was responsible for certification, while discipline processes were administered by the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF), the League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents (LEADS) and

the Ministry of Education.

The Saskatchewan Professional Teachers Regulatory Board (SPTRB) will now be responsible for providing a more transparent certification and discipline process, to protect the interests of students and the public. Consolidation of these regulatory functions into a single organization has resulted in a process that is more consistent, fair and transparent.

Ministry of Environment

The Open Seasons Game Regulations

The Open Seasons Game Regulations is a Minister's Order Regulation that provides the flexibility and timeliness to meet changing wildlife management requirements and pressing stakeholder interests on an annual basis. The 2015 amendments also enhance customer service and opportunity, by providing increased hunter opportunity through new seasons and increased hunting limits.

The Big Game Draw was modernized by allowing hunters to choose the hunting season of their choice.

A new draw opportunity was offered for pronghorn antelope, while bag limits and quotas were increased for a number of game species. A select season was harmonized with a neighbouring jurisdiction, to increase hunter opportunity.

Ministry of Government Relations

Vote Counting Machines

Vote counting machines are revolutionizing the way ballots are counted in elections. Municipalities in Saskatchewan have the option to create bylaws allowing for the use of vote counting machines during municipal elections. Several cities, including Regina, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, Yorkton and Swift Current, have taken advantage of this technology and continue to modernize their election processes.

Though municipalities have the flexibility to create vote counting machine bylaws, the bylaws are required to align with the principles and requirements of *The Local Government Election Act, 2015* and its associated regulations. This expectation led to confusion as to how the legislation and vote counting machine technology could be made compatible.

The province worked closely with cities using vote counting machine technology to establish minimal criteria for their use and to clarify grey areas in the legislation that did not address specific requirements of the machines. The resulting regulations have aligned vote counting machine procedures in municipalities with local election legislation. The regulations can be used as a guide for municipalities currently using vote counting machines, and for municipalities that are considering adopting bylaws in the future.

The new vote counting machine requirements for municipal elections continue the provincial government's commitment to building a flexible and modern regulatory framework. The regulations have been crafted to ensure municipalities have the maximum amount of flexibility possible, when creating their own bylaws, while continuing to comply with local election requirements.

The Principles for Financial Settlements between Municipalities, for Boundary Alterations

The *Saskatchewan Plan for Growth* pledged to accelerate the annexation process by developing new policies and a common framework to provide consistency and fairness in municipal land annexation decisions. One of the key issues that can block agreement between municipalities in some instances is the question of what financial compensation should be paid by one municipality to the other.

Between 2014 and 2015, the Ministry of Government Relations, in collaboration with the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA) and the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) developed a set of principles for financial settlements between municipalities for boundary alterations. These overarching principles are intended for use both by and for municipalities, in determining annexation compensation. They will also be used by the Saskatchewan Municipal Board (SMB) if municipalities cannot settle matters. Municipalities continue to be encouraged to voluntarily reach their own mutually acceptable annexation agreements.

Use of the principles can represent a significant step toward reducing conflicts and delays with respect to deciding municipal boundary alterations. The principles also offer transparency and predictability, as well as advance understanding for municipalities about how the SMB will review disputes relating to annexation compensation, if referred to the SMB for resolution.

The principles have been incorporated into "A Guide for Municipal Boundary Alterations (Annexation)". This guide also includes a set of related questions to each principle—to give municipalities guidance in their use and to help explain how each principle should

be interpreted by rural and urban municipalities. It is posted on the website of the Ministry of Government Relations.

New *Fire Safety Regulations*

The Government of Saskatchewan passed *The Fire Safety Act, 2015* in spring 2015, replacing the over 20-year-old *Fire Prevention Act, 1992*. The new Act updates local and provincial roles and responsibilities to better support fire safety and fire service response in the province.

New regulations were needed to operationalize and proclaim the new Act. In developing new regulations, the Ministry of Government Relations took the opportunity to conduct a full review with stakeholders of the separate existing regulations: *The Saskatchewan Fire Code Regulations* and *The Fire Insurance Fees and Reporting Regulations*. This was done to determine what provisions were necessary and where improvements could be made.

The new regulations consolidated the two separate regulations into a single regulation, while retaining key provisions related to the National Fire Code fire insurance premium and incident reporting. These areas were substantively unchanged to ensure timely and seamless transition to the new regulations for fire services, code users (such as building owners and managers), and other stakeholders (such as the insurance industry). In addition, language and terminology were updated, and an outdated and unnecessary licence and fee to install and sell oil burning equipment was removed.

The new *Fire Safety Regulations* and Act came into force on November 2, 2015. They enhance customer service and opportunity by:

- Continuing to provide for the protection of public safety;
- Maintaining consistency of processes, standards and practices for industry and fire services; and
- Providing a single point of reference for all stakeholders and the ministry, going forward.

Water Security Agency

Repeal of *The Drainage Control Regulations*

In 2015, *The Drainage Control Regulations* were repealed and new provisions governing drainage were included in *The Water Security Agency Regulations*.

The *Drainage Control Regulations* were out-of-date and prescriptive, having been introduced in the early 1980s. Further, an online forum and survey on drainage in 2014 and stakeholder consultation in 2015 found broad support for a risk-based approach to drainage that would place responsibility on proponents to properly design and mitigate the impacts of drainage.

The new approach to drainage envisions appropriate mitigation of negative impacts and the use of qualified persons in drainage planning and design, both of which were enabled in *The Water Security Agency Regulations*. This is of particular importance to rural residents in the agricultural region of the province.

The Water Security Agency Regulations also enable the Water Security Agency (WSA) to shift its focus away from the resource-heavy drainage complaint process to proactive work, in order to bring drainage works into approval. New provisions enable agricultural producers to more readily obtain approvals for drainage works, providing more certainty to their operations.

Repeal of *The Reservoir Development Area Regulations*

Also in 2015, *The Reservoir Development Area Regulations* (RDA regulations) were repealed and amended provisions were included in *The Water Security Agency Regulations*. These regulations were developed over 40 years ago to manage development in Reservoir Development Areas (RDAs).

Every type of development or proposal within RDA boundaries required a permit from the WSA and conformity to a zoning system. Some developments required amendments to the zoning system, which required a regulatory amendment. The RDA boundaries extended beyond those lands that have direct water management implications. In addition, the zoning system had become mostly redundant to *The Planning and Development Act* and municipal development bylaws.

The amended RDA-related provisions in *The Water Security Agency Regulations* greatly reduce the area requiring a development permit, focusing on areas where development could be at risk from water levels or erosion around the shoreline. These revisions eliminate delays and the work of obtaining permits for much of the formerly regulated area.

The revisions also eliminate the land use districts established under the RDA regulations. As a result, the responsibility forestablishing appropriate land use through zoning bylaws and official community plans resides with the relevant municipality, thus avoiding potential conflicts between municipal zoning schemes and that established under the RDA regulations. Eliminating the zoning system and reducing the area where development permits are required removed unnecessary obstacles to development.

Expanding Online Tools and Solutions

The internet and technology have revolutionized the way businesses operate and interact with the government. They have allowed the government to improve regulatory services by providing better access to information—making it easier and faster to submit applications and seek approvals. There is an overall reduction in administrative time, both for government and the client to process documents. The internet and technology also have provided clients with the ability to submit applications day or night, at times convenient for them. Some initiatives that the government has implemented to further expand online regulatory tools, solutions and technologies include the following:

Ministry of Agriculture

Agriculture Development Fund (ADF) Online

In order to provide improved customer service and better online tools, the Ministry of Agriculture has implemented an upgrade to its online Agriculture Development Fund (ADF) application system.

Clients can now preview PDFs of ADF letters of intent and full applications at any time during the application process. This exercise improves customer service and will help to deliver the ministry's programming more efficiently.

Environmental Farm Plan Online System

Effective April 1, 2015, the completion of the Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) in Saskatchewan was changed to an online system, through the Ministry of Agriculture's EFP web portal. Previously, the EFP information was delivered through workshops, while the completion of a paper version of the EFP was completed manually.

The EFP program raises awareness about the importance of environmental protection and sustainability. Farmers and ranchers complete them as self-assessments of environmental risks on their farms, and develop action plans to mitigate those risks. The new website allows farmers and ranchers to develop and submit an EFP online, minimizing the use of paper and improving convenience for clients. Online resources are available to help farmers and ranchers work their way through the EFP. Support is also available to help with problems encountered in completing an EFP and/or to provide additional agriculture specialist information.

Ministry of the Economy

The Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program Entrepreneur Category Online Application Initiative

The Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP) Entrepreneur category was created for applicants seeking to move to Saskatchewan who want to invest their resources and actively manage a Saskatchewan business or farm operation.

In September 2015, the category criteria were updated, using a lean approach. This resulted in the introduction of the Expression of Interest (EOI) online application for this category. The online application allows for priority processing of qualified applicants, using a points-based ranking system.

The updates improve efficiency and transparency for customers in this category, while providing them better access to economic opportunities in Saskatchewan. The online application system decreases processing times and reduces administrative costs associated with program operation. Qualified immigrant entrepreneurs are now selected faster, and their applications are efficiently processed. As a result, applicants can arrive sooner in Saskatchewan to establish their business and investment activities and create jobs in the province.

The EOI online system provides a solution to program processing inefficiencies that existed under the previous paper-based system. In addition, the costs associated with sending and receiving paper-based application packages and correspondence, and additional costs associated with receiving and storing large paper applications, will be reduced considerably through this electronic process.

Process Renewal and Infrastructure Management Enhancements (PRIME) Project

In 2009, the Ministry of the Economy launched Process Renewal and Infrastructure Management Enhancements (PRIME), a multi-year program to renew and modernize its oil and gas business and regulatory processes and supporting technology systems. Through multiple projects, PRIME implemented Petrinex and the Integrated Resource Information System (IRIS) and, in doing so, introduced online self-service, a new way for Saskatchewan's energy and resource industry to complete its activities with the Government of Saskatchewan.

Petrinex provides online regulatory reporting of monthly volumetric, valuation and royalty taxpayer information to the Government of Saskatchewan.

Benefits to industry include:

- Increased accessibility to better, more reliable and more timely oil and gas data, including self-service information retrieval;
- Reduced royalty over-payments, penalties, provisional assessments and fees;
- Fewer amendments, reworks and reconciliation;
- Fewer penalties due to late or incorrect data;
- Elimination of the estimation process, with industry now invoiced on actual production; and
- Standardization and improved effectiveness of input, reporting and analytic processes.

Through IRIS, the oil and gas industry completes regularly performed business activities and regulatory tasks with the province online.

IRIS benefits industry through:

- Increased accessibility to better, more reliable and more timely oil and gas data, including self-service information retrieval;
- Reduced processing times for routine well applications—from one to three days to immediate processing;
- Complete automation of some petroleum tenure processes, including parcel posting requests and participation in Crown public offerings (Crown land sales);
- Elimination of manually intensive reconciliations by automating lease continuance; and
- Electronic invoice delivery.

PRIME also helped modernize the province's oil and gas regulatory framework by renewing three Acts (*The Crown Minerals Act; The Freehold Oil and Gas Production Tax Act, 2010; The Oil and Gas Conservation Act*) and 10 regulations (The Freehold Oil and Gas Production Tax Regulations, 2012; The Recovered Crude Oil Tax Regulations, 2012; The Crown Oil and G*as Royalty Regulations, 2012; The Oil and Gas Conservation Regulations, 2012; The Petroleum Registry and Electronic Documents Regulations; The Petroleum Research Incentive Regulations; The Helium and Associated Gases Regulations; The Weyburn Unit CO2 Freehold Oil Production Tax Regulations; The Weyburn Unit CO2 Crown Oil Royalty Regulations;* and *The Oil and Gas Tenure Registry Regulations*).

PRIME has improved client service by providing industry with options when it needs assistance meeting business and regulatory requirements. Along with online self-service options, industry can contact one of the Ministry of the Economy's service areas to receive personalized support with regulatory or business questions.

Ministry of Government Relations

Municipal Growth Readiness Checklist

In December 2015, the Ministry of Government Relations launched the Municipal Growth Readiness Checklist (MGRC) for use by Saskatchewan municipalities. The MGRC is one of the ministry's contributions to the provincial government's *Saskatchewan Plan for Growth*.

The MGRC is designed as a discussion starter; a means of getting municipal officials to think about the challenges and impacts that current or future municipal and regional growth can have on their municipality, and about whether or not they are able to adequately respond.

The MGRC is a simple self-assessment tool for municipalities' use, utilizing local knowledge and information readily available to them. The tool was designed in consultation with the municipal associations as a follow-up to the previous municipal government sustainability self-assessment tool, which is also on the ministry's website.

Provincial Disaster Assistance Program Standardized Software and Report Format

In order to improve consistency, the Provincial Disaster Assistance Program (PDAP) adopted an insurance industry standardized adjusting software and report format.

This move allows PDAP to receive adjuster reports in a consistent manner and electronically upload them to its claims management database, thus reducing data entry errors, improving efficiency and reducing processing time.

The software also provides adjusters with a regularly updated standardized price list for most items being adjusted. PDAP expects this increased transparency will improve the customer experience. In addition, the software will simplify the adjuster's job and reduce the time required for them to prepare their reports.

Saskatchewan Government Insurance

High School Driver Education

In 2015, Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI) moved from an onerous paper-based process for funding high school driver education to a much more efficient online payment system.

Prior to the change, SGI provided initial funding based on estimates provided by the school divisions and First Nations high schools. The driver educators had to fill out forms on a regular basis, outlining the actual amount of in-class and in-car training they did. They would then submit the forms to the school divisions. Next, the forms would be submitted to SGI for reconciliation by December 31st of each school year. It took three SGI staff about eight to 12 weeks to manually reconcile each school division's submissions (there are about 420 high schools offering driver education in Saskatchewan).

With the new online system, this process is now fully automated. A consequence of this is increased SGI accountability—by improving the ability to audit, report and reconcile funding supplied to provincial and First Nations high schools. In addition, school divisions and First Nations high schools have an increased role in the approval process. The time to ensure funding is validated has also been minimized. The overall result is that it is easier to do business with SGI and easier for SGI to fund and partner with the schools.

Regulatory Alignment across Jurisdictions

In an increasingly globalized marketplace, Saskatchewan businesses operate across domestic and international borders with increased frequency. Regulations that are out-of-step with other jurisdictions can be frustrating to businesses that must comply with multiple sets of regulations that can be duplicative or in conflict. The Government of Saskatchewan is working to streamline regulations with local, provincial and federal jurisdictions to facilitate the movement of goods and services across borders with fewer burdens to the provider or consumer.

Development of smart regulations requires:

- Research of best practices be completed across a variety of jurisdictions; and
- The best practices are adapted to Saskatchewan's local needs.

The following initiatives have been implemented to improve inter-jurisdictional alignment:

Ministry of Agriculture

Pest Control Product Regulations

The regulatory amendments to *The Pest Control Products Regulations* enabled a number of administrative and housekeeping changes, bringing Saskatchewan in line with other provinces.

The changes include:

- **Cost recovery:** The regulations were amended to reflect a full cost recovery model for the handling and processing of Pesticide Applicator and Pesticide Service Licence fees. This resulted in increasing fees from $20 to $50 and brought Saskatchewan's licence fees more in line with Alberta and Manitoba, thus ensuring greater regulatory harmonization across the prairies.
- **Five-year licence:** The Pesticide Applicator training in Saskatchewan is currently valid for five years; however, the Pesticide Applicator Licence issued by the ministry is valid for only one year and renewed annually. The regulations were amended to implement a five-year licence to replace the annual licence for Pesticide Applicators. This reflects current practices in other jurisdictions.
- Modernization changes, including:

  o **Fly Sprays:** Under the previous regulations, retail outlets that do not carry any other agricultural chemicals needed to have a trained dispenser and a facility vendor licence to sell the commercial/agricultural/industrial categorized topical aerosol sprays. However, most of these products have the formulations and concentrations that are same as the domestic products commonly sold over the counter. The amended regulations allow such stores to sell these products without violating the regulations.

  o **Global Positioning Systems:** It is now common practice for most applicators to use Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment to keep spray records; however, this was not reflected in the previous regulations. The amended regulations now require these records be produced, along with other records kept by the applicator, upon request by ministry officials.

  o **Timeframe to produce records:** The previous regulations did not specify a timeframe for applicators, vendors or service providers to produce their records upon request, resulting in the ministry experiencing a recurring problem of delayed compliance. The amended regulations require that records be made available to ministry personnel within a two-week timeframe from the request, thus expediting the investigation and action by the Provincial Pesticide Investigator.

  o **Direct supervision:** The previous regulations allowed individuals (without a pesticide applicators' licence) to apply pesticides under the direct supervision of a licensed applicator within "auditory hailing distance." However, with current technology such as cell phones, this was being misinterpreted. The amendment clarifies that an untrained person applying pesticides must be under the direct supervision of a licensed applicator, and that means within "visual and auditory hailing

distance." This increases the duty of care when supervising untrained workers and improves safety for both workers and the general public.

- **Insurance:** Insurance requirements for Aerial Applicators for pesticide drift/chemical trespass were outdated and did not reflect the current economic value for the crop ($25,000 coverage for each occurrence). Many applicators carry insurance beyond this, but to protect farmers, an increased insurance coverage limit was implemented (a minimum of $100,000).

Saskatchewan Premises Identification System

Saskatchewan's livestock and poultry sector is an important driver of the provincial economy, generating $2.7 billion of farm cash receipts in 2014.

In 2006, provincial and territorial ministers of Agriculture committed to phase in the National Agriculture and Food Traceability System. In the summer of 2009, the ministers supported a move toward a comprehensive, mandatory national traceability system for livestock and poultry, which is critical for managing animal health and disease surveillance, as well as maintaining market access for Canadian products.

The National Traceability System is based on three pillars:

- Premises identification (PID);
- Animal identification; and
- Animal movement reporting.

It is the responsibility of the provinces to ensure that PID is implemented for livestock and poultry in each province. A PID number is a unique identifying number assigned to a specific piece of property. It is used to link farm animals and their movement to geographical locations for disease, health and food safety purposes and effective emergency responses. The Saskatchewan PID system ensures that livestock and poultry producers in this province have access to a PID registry that complies with national standards.

The development of an online portal for prs the database has been an important initiative undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture. The online portal provides livestock and poultry producers with maximum flexibility to establish and manage their account information and register their premises from anywhere and at any time. This has created significant time savings for the database administrator, and increased accuracy of the database information.

> **"Premises IDs provide the key linkage between traceability systems such as PigTrace, and verified geographic locations."**
>
> - **Mark Ferguson, Manager, Industry Program and Policy Analysis, Saskatchewan Pork Development Board**

SaskEnergy

Fairness Advisor

The Fairness Advisor is an independent resource engaged by SaskEnergy to enhance the transparency and openness of a procurement competition.

SaskEnergy first utilized a Fairness Advisor in 2015. This is in alignment with the provincial government's Procurement Transformation Action Plan, led by the Priority Saskatchewan branch. The aim is to implement a best practice approach to ensuring Saskatchewan businesses are treated fairly and that procurements are open, accessible and transparent.

A Fairness Advisor is an independent party retained to oversee a competitive procurement. They are typically used when large or sensitive contracts are being awarded. Employing a Fairness Advisor is intended to improve the confidence of all parties that the competitive process used was fair and unbiased. The advisor reviews the process, oversees the conduct of the competition and will provide a written report that will be shared with participating vendors.

This resource can be an important tool to augment accountability and transparency where the business environment isespecially competitive, the potential award is large or there are unique sensitivities.

Ministry of Environment

Amendment to *The Household Packaging and Paper Stewardship Program Regulations*

A regulatory amendment to *The Household Packaging and Paper Stewardship Program Regulations* allowed for the formalization of the Multi-Material Recycling Program small business exemption, as well as the clarification of steward requirements in the areas of:

- Franchise agreements;
- Online sales; and
- Exemption of registered charity organizations.

The regulatory amendments standardize steward requirements across jurisdictions and align with other provincial programs' use of small business policies.

The provincial service provider is part of a national stewardship organization. This simplifies business reporting, as businesses now only need to report to one national stewardship organization instead of to different organizations in different jurisdictions.

The Wildfire Regulations

Rather than designating all park land as designated land, *The Wildfire Act* authorized this designation to be prescribed in *The Wildfire Regulations* to allow for the addition or removal of park land. However, following the Ministry of Environment's consultation with the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport, Parks Division, it was recommended that all park land be designated land under *The Wildfire Act*.

The Wildfire Regulations were amended to reflect the recommendations. The change authorizes the Minister of Environment to administer all park land under the same wildfire prevention and preparedness standards that apply to provincial forest land. The amendment is not expected to place any new financial or operational obligations on the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport, industry, rural municipalities or the public.

Ministry of Health

The Hearing Aid Sales and Services Regulations, 2015

The Hearing Aid Sales and Services Regulations were amended to facilitate compliance with the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) and the New West Partnership Trade Agreement (NWPTA). The amendment enables individuals to be recognized as qualified hearing instrument practitioners in Saskatchewan if they are certified as hearing instrument practitioners with a similar scope of practice and are in good standing with a regulatory authority in another jurisdiction of Canada.

The AIT seeks to achieve full labour mobility for workers in regulated provinces in Canada, while the NWPTA seeks to achieve full labour mobility for workers across western provinces. Although 'hearing instrument practitioner' is not a self-regulated occupation in Saskatchewan, the occupation is considered to be regulated for the purposes of labour mobility under both the AIT and the NWPTA.

Extended Insurance Coverage

The Medical Care Insurance Beneficiary and Administration Regulations had provisions that required Saskatchewan residents to be physically present in the province for at least six months of the year in order to retain eligibility for health coverage.

The Canadian Snowbird Association and others who would like to reside outside Saskatchewan for a period longer than six months each year had been requesting a change to these regulations. The requested change would increase the period of time an individual can stay absent from the province, in order to retain their eligibility for health coverage under the provincial health insurance plan.

The regulations were amended, reducing the required time period from six months to five months of the year. The regulatory amendments were developed based on best practices across Canada.

Most Canadian jurisdictions, including British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Northwest Territories allow their residents to be absent from the province for a period more than six months each year (most allow absences of up to seven months). The amendments were developed to meet the needs of Saskatchewan residents, while also improving regulatory alignment with most Canadian jurisdictions.

SaskPower

The Electrical Code Regulations

Previously, electrical standards in Saskatchewan were set out in three separate regulations under *The Electrical Inspection Act, 1993*. While each of these standards (the Canadian Electrical Code, the Code for Electrical Installations at Oil and Gas Facilities and the CSA M421 Standard for Use of Electricity in Mines) was updated prior to or in 2015, regulatory amendment was required to adopt the latest versions.

As part of this amendment, in 2015, the three regulations were combined into one—*The Electrical Code Regulations*. These combined regulations make it easier to find and understand what electrical standards apply in Saskatchewan.

Ensuring that the latest versions of these standards are adopted soon after they become available ensures that Saskatchewan's regulations are in line with other Canadian provinces. This enhances public safety and makes it easier for electrical contractors to move between provinces.

The Gas Inspection Regulations

The Gas Inspection Regulations adopt a number of CSA gas standards.

These standards are routinely updated, with several updated versions released in 2015. The regulations were amended to adopt the latest version of each affected gas standard.

Ensuring that the latest versions of these standards are adopted soon after they become available ensures that Saskatchewan regulations are in line with other Canadian provinces. This enhances public safety and makes it easier for gas contractors to move between provinces.

Conclusion

The Government of Saskatchewan has made significant strides in creating a framework to modernize regulations in the province; however, the process still continues. Countries around the world have recognized that to remain competitive in a world economy, regulatory modernization is not just a good idea, but a necessity.

As new regulations are developed and existing ones reviewed, the government will continue to apply regulatory best practices, including:

- Open and meaningful consultations with stakeholders to identify barriers; and
- Consideration of costs and benefits when developing or amending regulations.

Saskatchewan residents expect a government that is responsive to their needs. A smart regulatory system helps to meet that expectation, particularly a system that is flexible and considers all alternatives before adding new regulations.

Red tape reduction is a key initiative to help build a vibrant and prosperous economy. A modern regulatory system will keep Saskatchewan on the path of growth, attracting new investments and encouraging reinvestment from existing businesses in the province, benefiting all residents.

For More Information

Ministry of the Economy

Marketing and Communications

1000 – 2103 11th Avenue

Regina, SK S4P 3Z8

Tel: (306) 787-4765

Fax: (306) 787-8447

Appendix

Appendix A

Red Tape Reduction Saving						
			TYPE OF CHANGE – EXTERNAL (Amounts in $ millions)			
Ministry/Agency/Crown	**Fiscal Year Initiative Completed**	**Red Tape Reduction Initiative**	**Financial**	**Operating**	**Administrative**	**Total External**
SaskTel/SaskEnergy/ SaskPower	2014-15	Sask 1st Call Safety Patrols				
Government Relations	2014-15	Provincial Disaster Assistance Program (PDAP)			0.85	0.85
SGI	2014-15	Vehicle Inspection Regulations			0.8	0.8
Health	2015-16	Public Accommodation Regulations			1.6926	1.6926
Economy	2015-16	Oil and Gas Well Levy Payment Procedures			1.1638	1.1638
Total Savings ($ Millions)					**4.5**	**4.5**

s - Running Total

TYPE OF CHANGE — INTERNAL (Amounts in $ millions)						
Financial	Operating	Administrative	Total internal	Total Impact ($ Millions)	Fiscal Total ($ Millions)	Annual Progress Report Reference
	7.9		7.9	7.90		2014-15; Page 11
		0.85	0.85	1.70		2014-15; Page 6
		0.8	0.8	1.60	11.20	2014-15; Page 17
	0.5735	0.8431	1.4166	3.11		N/A. Initiative in progress
				1.16	4.27	2014-15; Page 13
	8.5	**2.5**	**11.0**	**15.5**		